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If you're visiting, do let me know.

COMMODORE'S JOTTINGS

Hello Everybody,

Well a year ago I started a newsletter with "I cannot believe it was 6 months ago that I last put together a newsletter", and now I have to apologise that it has taken me a year to get the next one out. I think I was very much running on adrenalin at that time but even though that has worn off I am coping very well – Ron will be proud of me as he sails around on his cloud.

So, the answer to "What about Timbo?". Well as luck would have it, Ron had shown Timbo to some friends about 3 years ago to convince them a 38' would not be big enough for what they wanted. After Ron died they wondered if I would be selling, asked a few of my friends and were directed to speak to Derek, the friend who had given Ron's eulogy. He spoke to me, I decided it was no time to be sentimental and consequently Timbo has become Elstar – the strain of cider apple the new owner grows/or grew, not sure which. However the tale does not end there. I was advised to buy property with the proceeds, Derek's son was selling a lovely little house which overlooks Portland Harbour and the Sailing Academy so I bought that and sort of repaid Derek's favour. Fate is a wonderful thing! I have also disposed of Ron's big toys – Duggie the mini-digger, Dylan the motor scooter, his ride-on mower – all without adverts, and Duggie is now 'doing' the remains of my garden so has come home to see me.

I am still getting out on the water with friends and had a wonderful time on the rally last year. I do hope more will join up for this year, and I will be able to meet you there.

Best wishes to you all for the 2010 season,
Nichola

2010 Rally

2009 certainly made up for the 2008 lack of a rally as Tony and Helen Giblett put together a 'proper' one based around the Plymouth area. It was so good to have wonderful and very different days on and off the water without having to go far. This year they propose to host a similar event but want to open it up so you can bring friends on their boats. Because the Plymouth area is so varied the programme did give us the opportunity to enjoy many different experiences with the older hands being able to help the not so confident. Look out for further news on this event, which will be held 7th August.

Other Rally Ideas?

If you can't make the rally in August why not have a look at the list of fellow Club members, note who is in your vicinity and see if they would like to meet up if only for a weekend. This is probably particularly appropriate to those based around the Solent area or the Channel Islands, but do let me know if you do decide to plan something as I will put the word out so any boats visiting from other areas might have the opportunity to join in. Even though I am boat-less, I did give me a rather nice Christmas present and am very happy to drive to meet up with anybody, well, within a bit of reason. Now you'll have to invite me to see what the present was!

ARE WE ADDRESSING YOU CORRECTLY?

Please let us know if any of your details contain any errors or need any changes. We sometimes get forgotten when members change address, particularly email ones.

The Font of All AQUA-STARS

Geoff has decided to standardise the font used for the written words AQUASTAR. This is the nearest font I can find – CENTAUR in BOLD – a small type the font size - this is 12 point.

Factory News

For those of you who have received this newsletter by email you will see there are some pictures of the new 80' boat making its way out of Bulwer Avenue plus there is a press release on the website – www.aquastar.gg. As you can see it is a very tight turn – I do wish I had been there to see it. The boat is called Trafalgar and is being finished now in the Marina. Geoff reports that the initial performance was very good with 20 knots achieved from the two 1000hp engines, but some tweaking was due to be carried out to improve on this.

It appears that 2009/10 has been a very good year for 45-48' boats getting up and moving around and generally being brought up to higher specifications. The demonstrator was sold following last September's Boat Show, so a new boat is in build and should be available for show at the Jersey Boat Show held over the early May Bank Holiday. Timbo was sold last August and has become 'Elstar'. She is still on my berth in Weymouth Marina which is a bit sad, but this is tempered by my not having the enormous responsibility. Wind Cheater has been sold and is back in Guernsey having a passarelle fitted. The new owner is Keith Musto who already has a 38' Aquastar. Solent Star is also in the factory having stabilisers fitted. Having made the passage from Southampton to St Peter Port on the demonstrator last September, I can thoroughly recommend these and had circumstances been different, I can tell you Ron would have been having a real ear bashing over the subject! By coincidence both Wind Cheater and Solent Star are destined for Sant Carles, the new MDL marina in Spain.

The 74' Petit Souris is being fitted with a hydraulic passarelle, plus a new 84' boat has just been announced. This will be an extension of the 80' model, and will incorporate a hydraulic swim platform.

Finally, some will have seen the article in Motor Boats Monthly extolling the virtues of buying a secondhand 38' Aquastar and many can give themselves a well deserved pat on the back for making such a good choice. This is still a very popular boat, maybe it could be time to have a new model which incorporates the advances which have been tried and tested on the bigger boats. I welcome your comments.

What does the future hold for our lighthouses, or the next great struggle with the Establishment?

The thought of these marks ever disappearing might seem unthinkable, yet the General Lighthouse Authorities (GLA), who maintain our Aids to Navigation, is mooting the idea of discontinuing a number of lighthouses and Aids to Navigation as part of their five yearly review.

The GLAs claim that as navigational technology advances, reliance on the traditional system of lighthouses around the coast diminishes. With the exception of leading lights and PEL sector lights, landfall lights and passing lights are now considered less important and their primary function is for confirmation of position and spatial awareness.

The GLAs reason that 'traditional' aids to navigation can be regarded as a secondary but complementary system to the primary navigation system of GNSS.

RYA View

The RYA's Stuart Carruthers has been chewing over the issue: "On the one hand, there is little doubt that the Aids to Navigation are being reviewed largely with the needs of commercial vessels in mind.

"This is understandable as it is clear that most physical Aids to Navigation are positioned to mark major hazards and high density traffic schemes and are of far less significance for leisure craft navigation.

"In addition to this, recreational boaters are not confined to established shipping routes and are more than capable of navigating in and exploring areas that are pretty much unmarked anyway, in fact, this is a big part of the skills that we teach through our training syllabus."

The RYA still believes that there is no case for recreational boaters to pay non-periodic light dues on vessels below 20m LOA and has worded its response to the GLA review with that uppermost in its mind.

Perhaps of greatest concern, however, is the proposed over reliance on emerging technology such as AIS to provide navigational warnings; currently, this technology is not widely fitted to small craft and the Class B 'recreational' transceivers are unlikely to be able to process these warnings.

"It's a tricky issue and one to keep an eye on in the future" Stuart concluded: "At present, these changes won't unduly affect the recreational boater, but we will be looking at future developments and trying to ensure we don't end up in a situation where recreational boaters are over reliant on expensive technology."

If you have views on this or other boating matters do pass them to Nichola so she can raise them with the RYA

New flare disposal system announced

Yes, it's that time of year again when you have a good clearout of all the junk on your boat and start purchasing fresh junk to clutter it up again. The chances are that you have also discovered that your flares are out of date and need to be replaced.

Now for the past few years a single question has recurred; what am I supposed to do with the old ones?

Following the introduction of new health and safety rules restricting the storage and transport of flares, or Time Expired Pyrotechnics (TEP), no-one seemed terribly keen to handle them any more and this led to many of us filling up our shed with the wretched things until we had something equating to weapons of mass destruction stockpiled. We were just left hoping that Dr Hans Blix didn't start snooping around.

Solutions

The RYA has been trying for a number of years to resolve this problem. Together with the RNLI and MCA, we have raised the issue through the UK SAR operators group to the Government Interdepartmental Group (chaired by DfT) to try and sort out the problem in the absence of the manufacturer/ distributor implementing a workable solution.

Regrettably, there is nothing to compel manufacturers/distributors to implement a disposal route. They are unwilling to amortise the disposal costs in the purchase price because there is no level regulatory playing field.

This means they will inevitably be paying to dispose of TEP made by other manufacturers who do not charge for disposal at the point of sale, such as mail order or the internet from China. They also know that by and large we will shop around for the cheapest supply.

It is further regrettable that marina operators take a similar view: Because the industry has refused to play the game and because the Government seems powerless to compel them to do so, the MCA has been instructed to set up a disposal system for private recreational boaters only.

The MCA has set up disposal points at MRCC facilities that comply with H&SE legislation and can store TEP, it has contracted the collection and disposal of TEP to a firm called Ramora.

So the system that is available at present and for the foreseeable future is not wholly adequate, but is as good as it can be given the regulatory inadequacies that we operate in. Nevertheless TEP remains firmly on our agenda.

The RYA advises those who wish to carry flares or are compelled to do so, to buy them from suppliers who will take TEP in as part of the deal. More and more are offering this service albeit sometimes at a cost.

MCA Statement

In an official statement, the MCA said: "The MCA, with the assistance of the Department for Transport, will continue to accept TEPs from the public; however the collection and disposal service will no longer be undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with effect from the 31 March 2010 because of their operational pressures.

"Following recent changes of legislation with regard to the storage and transportation of explosives, MCA premises now require to be brought into line with those changes. This will mean that the number of sites which will be able to accept TEPs will be significantly reduced.

"The Agency plan to achieve this by concentrating available resources on 18 sites evenly spaced across the country. Analysis of the quantities of TEPs deposited with the MCA indicate that up to 70% of items find their way to the vicinity of the 18 proposed sites which will accept TEPs."

The sites are at the following Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres:

Shetland	Falmouth	Forth
Stornoway	Brixham	Inverness Sector Base
Belfast	Solent	North Norfolk Sector Base
Liverpool	Dover	Cruden Bay Coastguard Rescue Office
Holyhead	Thames	Girvan Coastguard Rescue Office
Milford	Humber	A location at Poole

Do let Nichola know if you have any problems and she will pass them to the RYA.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to the Club:

Trevor & Vivien Robinson	Humberside	Zonnering II	Wolverstone
Ray & Maureen Grimwood	Berkshire	Gallant Lady	Berthon, Lymington
Roy & Sue Wareham	Guernsey	Galactic	QEII, St Peter Port

News from the RYA Council

Needless to say much of the focus of the RYA is on the run up to the Olympics. Tomorrow I am attending the opening of the new Portland House, a purpose built accommodation block for the sailors training at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy. This week we have the RYA Volvo Youth National Championships and Trials taking place and I can vouch for them having enough wind for jolly good competitive racing. In August the Skandia Sail for Gold event will take place and there are increasing numbers of foreign teams training in the local waters. Road works locally are fairly chaotic and we still have 2 years to go - aarrgh.

I reported last time that I was thinking about a training course to make me a competent skipper of Timbo. Obviously the situation there changed (don't look a gift horse in the mouth springs to mind) but with my council hat on I am still interested in whether the motor boat based training courses offered by the RYA are what you want. I know most prefer to train on their own boats and having got to the stage of feeling competent can't see the need for a qualification. I can understand that, but wonder if you found yourself in difficulty legally and hence financially following a spot of trouble, would a qualification at least help prove your innocence? I would be very grateful for feedback on this topic because, when I raised it with the appropriate people in the RYA I did get the brush off that motor boaters don't want training, it's been tried before.... For all our protection maybe an agreement with the manufacturers, as is being tried with personal water craft, might be the answer. I know that only hits (oops unfortunate choice of word) the new to boating owners who are buying new boats but those are probably the ones who need it most.

DON'T FORGET THE DISCOUNTS!! - Keep this list handy onboard

Benefits to members are available from:

<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Offer</u>
Aqua Star	Geoff	Spares & parts at cost + 10% to Club members
CJR	Mark Russell 01703 639366	Call for special prices on props/sterngear
Euronav	Mark Day 01705 373855	20% off chart systems
Galleyslave	Birgit Morris 01527 592089	10% off unbreakable glasses and dinnerware
GJW Direct	Jo Griffiths 0151 236 6848	10% additional discount from boat insurance
Greenham Marine	Andy Haynes 01590 671144	Call for prices on autopilots etc.
Halyard	James Grazebrook 01722 710922	7.5% off exhausts etc.
Liquid Engineering	Gerry Yeatman 01794 884963	15% off diesel bug treatment
Marine & General Eng.	David Norman 01481 245808	Repair yard, chandlery in St Sampsons
Marine Electronic	Nicholas Heyes 01179 830770	Various
Marlin Marine	Alan Soper 023 80231306	5% off Iveco engine sales
Reed's Bookshop	Roger Hunter 0181 941 7878	Discuss direct
Toomer & Hayter	Vivien West 01202 515789	Discounts on upholstery
Vetus Southern	Richard Yates 01703 672277	10% off Vetus equipment

Don't forget David Norman is a fellow Aquastar owner and is therefore very well qualified to give advice if you have a lift-out at his boatyard in St Sampsons. What better than to combine the less pleasant jobs with a few days in Guernsey!